

REMARKS**1.) Claim Amendments**

Applicants have amended claim 16 and cancelled claims 1 – 15, 27 and 31 – 53, without prejudice. Accordingly, claims 16 – 26 and 28 – 30 are pending in the present patent application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

2.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 – 7, 9 – 26, 31 – 35 and 37 – 53 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,816,716 B1 issued to Hohnstein et al. (hereinafter "Hohnstein"). In response, Applicants have cancelled claims 1 – 7, 9 – 15, 27, 31 – 35 and 37 – 53 and amended independent claim 16 by incorporating therein the cancelled subject matter of claim 27. Accordingly, claim 16 is now believed to be patentable over Hohnstein based on the Examiner's indication that claim 27 "*would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.*"

Regarding claims 17 – 26, they depend from independent claim 16, which is believed to be patentable, and thus their rejection is moot.

3.) Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 8 and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hohnstein. In response, Applicants have cancelled both claims 8 and 36.

CONCLUSION

Claims 16 – 26 and 28 – 30 are presently standing in this patent application. In view of the foregoing remarks, each and every point raised in the Office Action mailed on May 17, 2005 has been addressed on the basis of the above remarks. Applicants believe all of the claims currently pending in this patent application to be in a condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections are respectfully requested. However, should the Examiner believe that direct contact with Applicants' attorney would advance the prosecution of the application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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